

2014/2015 SBAC Results Talking Points

- Because of last year's testing irregularities, results may not be an accurate reflection of student, school, or district performance. The 2014/2015 scores will not be used for state accountability.
- We are committed to making sure every student in Montana graduates from high school with an education that prepares them for success in college and career.
- Last spring was the first time Montana's students took an adaptive, online assessment measuring what they know and are able to do when it comes to the state's new, more-rigorous standards in math and English/Language Arts.
- The Smarter Balanced assessment replaced Montana's previous test, the Criterion Reference Test (CRT). The Smarter Balanced assessment is a better, more accurate tool for educators, students, and parents because it's aligned to Montana's rigorous math and English/language arts standards.
- The scores this year should not be compared to scores from previous years. As with any kind of change, it will take time for students and teachers to get comfortable with the new standards and tests.
- The new federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act, does not change assessment for 2016. States are still required to test students in grades 3-8 and once in high school.
- Because of last year's testing irregularities, student results may not be an accurate reflection of school, student or district performance.
 - About 76,000 Montana students were expected to take the Smarter Balanced test. About 64,000 (82 percent) Montana students were able to take the Smarter Balanced test, and of those, about 55,000 (72 percent) tests were scored.
 - 142 schools didn't test their students, that's about 18 percent of schools (792) that have eligible students.
- The Smarter Balanced assessment will be used next spring, but we are cutting the time spent testing:
 - Smarter Balanced will be the assessment used for federal accountability purposes in grades 3-8.

- ACT will be the assessment used for federal accountability purposes in grade 11, cutting testing time by two-thirds for public school juniors.
 - The Smarter Balanced assessment takes juniors, on average, eight hours to complete. If they were also taking ACT, that's 12 hours of testing. The ACT takes about four hours to complete.
 - Measured Progress and AIR are negotiating a contract that will allow Montana to deliver the 2015/2016 Smarter Balanced assessment using a proprietary platform, not the open-source platform that caused so many problems in 2014/2015.
 - Montana students will not participate in the Smarter Balanced classroom activity, cutting testing time for all students.
- Because of the technical challenges schools faced in 2014/2015, the Montana Office of Public Instruction has reached an agreement with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium saving Montana half (\$375,596) of its annual membership fees.
 - The Office of Public Instruction received a \$375,596 credit in membership fees from Smarter Balanced for the delay in Montana's interim test, and a credit for late delivery of the open-source platform.
 - The Office of Public Instruction will withhold 10 percent (\$130,000) of its contract with Measured Progress, until the vendor meets its 2014/2015 contract requirements.
- The federal education department requires all public schools to have a 95 percent participation rate on its statewide assessment. Because of last year's irregularities, most schools will not meet this requirement. However, schools will not be held accountable for this.